

HOUSE OF M

PRELUDE

MARVEL

PSR 14

CLAREMONT

LOPRESTI

ADAMS

EXCALIBUR



DIRECT EDITION

01411



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Lopresti
Townsend

I am Charles Xavier. I am a mutant. All my life, I have sought a way that mutants and humans might live together in peace and harmony. Hatred and fear between these two races destroyed the island-nation of Genosha and slaughtered 16 million people. From the ashes of that tragedy I hope to build a new and better world for all the Earth's children—before it's too late.

PREVIOUSLY

EXCALIBUR

"THE DEVIL'S OWN"

13 PART THREE OF FOUR



MAGNETO's daughter WANDA MAXIMOFF, the Avenger known as the SCARLET WITCH, has gone mad and lost control of her reality-altering powers, going on a destructive spree against her fellow Avengers that left the team in ruins. But before they could properly deal with her, Magneto arrived from his island home of Genosha to spirit her away.

Returning to Genosha with his daughter, Magneto appealed to CHARLES XAVIER to use his formidable powers of telepathy to restore her sanity. But after six months of increasingly frustrating effort, Xavier has made little progress on Wanda's tortured mind. Suspecting that Wanda's problems go beyond the merely psychological, he has turned to an old friend for help: DR. STEPHEN STRANGE, Earth's Sorcerer Supreme.

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CARMEN'S FAULT JUST TO ANNOY THE BRASS. HE CELEBRATES EVERY SUCCESSFUL MISSION BY PLAYING THE STONES, VOLUME PUMPED TO THE MAX. TODAY, IT'S "PAINT IT BLACK."

PILOTS ARE CRAZY

BUT NO LESS SO, I SUPPOSE, THAN THEIR CREW

PARTICULARLY WHEN OUR SPECIALTY IS "SEARCH AND RESCUE."

MY NAME IS CHARLES XAVIER.

I'M A CAPTAIN IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

MY COUNTRY'S AT WAR. MY CALL-SIGN IS "GOOD SHEPHERD."

IF YOU'RE CUT OFF BEHIND ENEMY LINES, OR JUST PLAIN LOST...

...IF THE MISSION'S IMPOSSIBLE

I'M THE GUY WHO GETS THE CALL TO BRING YOU HOME.

THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT!

The Devil's Own: CONCLUSION

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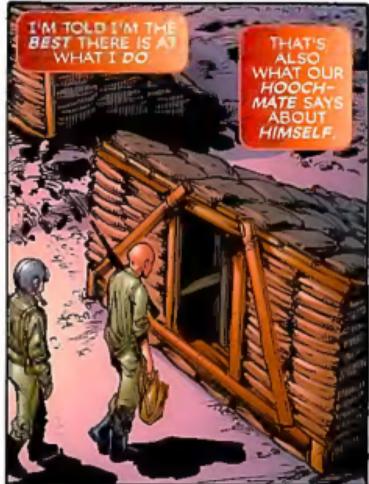
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AIN'T
GONNA
HAPPEN,
BUB.

LEAST,
NOT ON YOUR
SCHEDULE.

CHUCK
RE-UPPED
FOR
ANOTHER
TOUR.

BULL!

IT'S TRUE,
CARMEN.

THEN
I'M
STAYIN',
TOO!

ABSOLUTELY
NOT.

THE
HELL I'M
NOT!

WHO'S GONNA BE YOUR
PILOT? WHO'S GONNA LOOK
AFTER YOUR SKINNY, SORRY,
IVY-LEAGUE BUTT?

I GUESS I'LL
HAVE TO LEARN
TO TAKE CARE
OF MYSELF.

CHARLEY, THIS
IS SERIOUS!

GO HOME,
CARMEN. MARRY THERESA,
HAVE THOSE KIDS, LIVE HAPPILY
EVER AFTER. YOU'VE EARNED
THAT, AND MORE.

I'M JUST
NOT
DONE YET,
IS ALL.

NOBODY
ASKED YOU,
LOGAN.

THAT
IS SUCH A
CROCK.

TELL HIM
THE TRUTH,
CHUCK. YOU'RE
STAYIN' 'CUZ
YER LADY
DUMPED'JA.

NO WAY...

MOIRA?!

NO
WAY!

LETTER CAME
WHILE HE WAS IN
THE HOSPITAL, AFTER
OUR LAST OP.

NEVER
WANTS TO
SEE HIM
AGAIN.

100

100

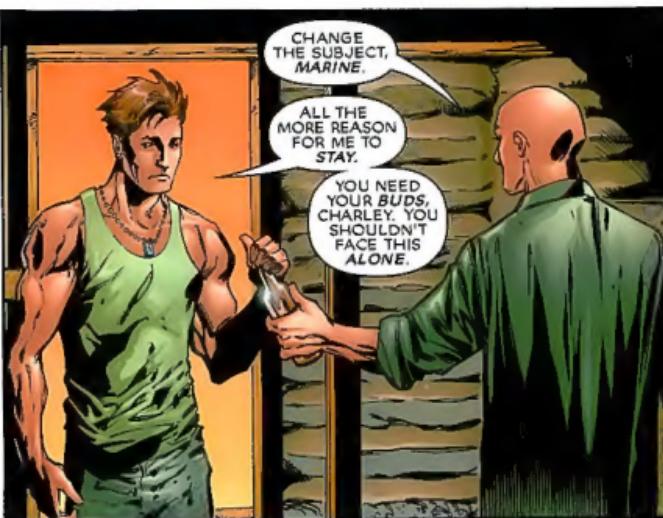
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I WANTED HELP TREATING THE MADNESS OF THE SCARLET WITCH...

...NOT TO GO STROLLING THROUGH MY MEMORIES.

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THERE'S NO CONNECTION?



THIS ISN'T WHAT I EXPECTED WHEN I ASKED FOR YOUR HELP.

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!



WHERE BETTER FOR WANDA TO HIDE THAN THE PLACES IN YOUR PSYCHE YOU WON'T GO?

I'M SIMPLY USING MAGIC AS A TOOL FOR BOTH THERAPY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS.

BECAUSE YOURS IS THE VIEWPOINT PSYCHE, YOU DEFINE THE SETTING.

BUT WHY SET THE SCENARIO AT THIS PARTICULAR POINT IN MY LIFE?

HOW OLD ARE YOU HERE?



MAGNETO, BEING THE OBJECT, DEFINES MUCH OF THE JOURNEY WE MUST TAKE.

WANDA, AS YOU'VE JUST SEEN, IS THE WILD CARD.

WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

IN CONTEXT, YOU GRADUATED COLLEGE WITH HONORS AT SIXTEEN, TWO YEARS AT OXFORD, WHERE YOU MET AND FELL IN LOVE WITH MOIRA MacTAGGART.

AT NINETEEN, YOU ENLISTED, O.C.S., COMMISSION, OFF TO WAR.

FROM HERE, BECAUSE OF THAT FATEFUL LETTER FROM MOIRA, YOU WANDER--TO EUROPE, TO ISRAEL, WHERE YOU MEET MAGNETO.

AND GABRIELLE HALLER.

SHE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!

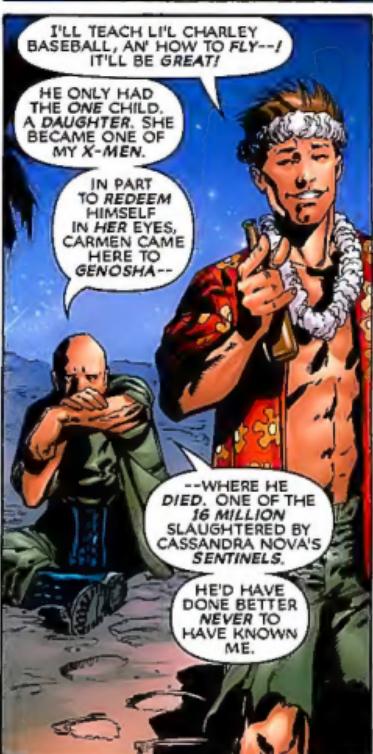
TOUCHY.

WHY IS THIS SUDDENLY ALL ABOUT ME?

CHARLES, YOU'RE A TELEPATH, YOUR PATIENT, THE SCARLET WITCH, MANIPULATES REALITY.

IF YOU'RE CONFLICTED, AMBIVALENT IN YOUR PURPOSE, HOW CAN YOU HELP HER?

YOUR GUILTS BECOME WEAPONS SHE CAN USE TO KEEP YOU AWAY.



I'M
STARTING
TO HATE MY
PSYCHE

THE "GENERAL" SEEMS
TO BE NICK FURY,
AND REPRESENTING
THE C.I.A. SCOTT
SUMMERS.

THE MAN
WHO, IN THE
"REAL WORLD,"
LEADS THE
HUNT FOR BOTH
WANDA AND
HER FATHER...

...AND THE ONE
WHO MANY
SEE AS MY
SURROGATE SON,
WHO'S LED THE
X-MEN SINCE
I FOUNDED THE
TEAM AND NOW
HEADS MY
SCHOOL AS
WELL.

WE HAVE A UNIQUE
SITUATION, CAPTAIN,
WHICH REQUIRES YOUR
UNIQUE SKILLS.

THING IS, THIS
AIN'T YER USUAL
SEARCH AND
RESCUE.

I'M AFRAID
THIS IS
SEARCH AND
DESTROY.

BEFORE
YOU PROTEST,
PLEASE
UNDERSTAND,
THIS MISSION
HAS BEEN
SANCTIONED BY
THE HIGHEST
AUTHORITY.

THE CONSENSUS
IS THAT THERE'S
NO OTHER VIABLE
ALTERNATIVE.

YOUR
PRIMARY
TARGET IS
MAGNETO.

WHATEVER
HIS ORIGINAL
INTENTIONS,
HIS IDEALS,
HIS DREAMS--
WHATEVER
HOPES YOU
MAY HAVE
HAD FOR
HIM--

--SINCE REUNITING
WITH HIS DAUGHTER
WANDA, HIS BEHAVIOR HAS
BECOME INCREASINGLY...
UNSTABLE.

GIVEN HIS
HISTORY, WE
CAN'T AFFORD
ANY BENEFIT
OF THE DOUBT.
WE HAVE TO
ASSUME THE
WORST.

HE'S
WITHDRAWN
TO BEAST
MOUNTAIN.

YOUR
MISSION IS
TO INFILTRATE
HIS COMMAND,
AND TERMINATE
THEM BOTH.

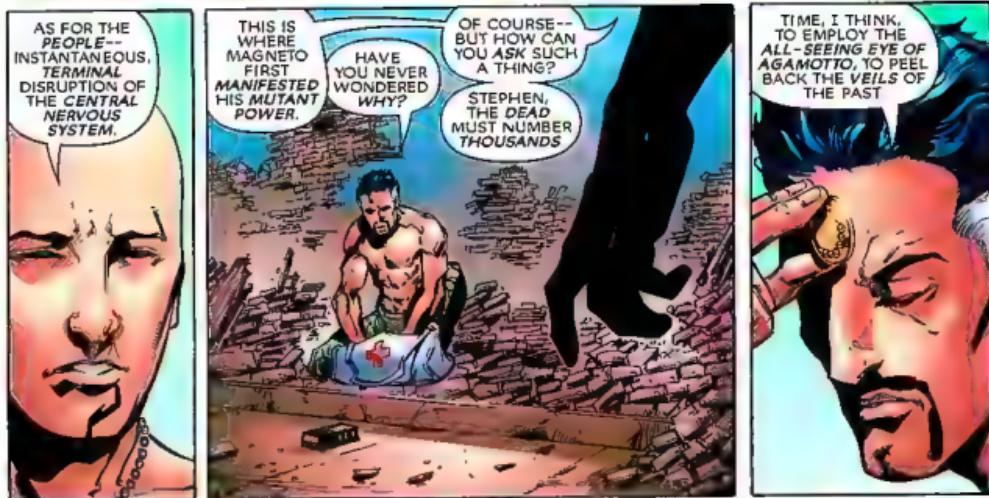
WITH
EXTREME
PREJUDICE.





CAP N--
WE'RE HIT!





I UNDERSTAND NOW--THE EYE HAS SHOWN ME MAGNETO SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST, ONLY TO WATCH HIS BELOVED DAUGHTER ANYA BURN TO DEATH, HERE IN VINITSA

THAT TRAGEDY CATALYZED HIS MUTANT POWER.

WHICH LED TO AN EVEN GREATER TRAGEDY, THE DESTRUCTION OF VINITSA--THAT IN TURN, SET THE PATTERN OF HIS LIFE.

IT EXPLAINS HIS PERPETUAL RAGE--BORN BOTH OF GRIEF AND GUILT

FAR MORE THAN THAT, HIS LACK OF TRUST, HIS ENDLESS QUEST TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT--

--PERHAPS EVEN WHY IT ALWAYS GOES WRONG

WHAT'S THIS PLACE?

OF COURSE, WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

IN THE SHADOW OF WUNDAGORE MOUNTAIN...

...STANDS THE HUT WHERE BOVA, THE COW-WOMAN, DELIVERED THE CHILDREN OF MAGDA LEHNHERR MAGNETO'S WIFE.

AFTER VINITSA, SHE FLED FROM MAGNETO

AFTER PIETRO AND WANDA WERE BORN, MAGDA WANDERED OUT INTO THE SNOW.

SHE WAS NEVER SEEN AGAIN

I WONDER--AFTER ANYA'S DEATH, HAD HE KNOWN SHE WAS PREGNANT, WITH TWINS...
...WOULD THAT HAVE RESTORED HIS FAITH?

WE HAVE TO MOVE FASTER.

THE PATH WE'RE FOLLOWING IS DESIGNED AROUND MY MEMORIES AND LIMITATIONS.

WE NEED TO CHANGE THE RULES AND CUT STRAIGHT TO THE CHASE.

I HAVE A SPELL THAT SHOULD WORK WONDERFULLY.



...AND
ULTIMATELY,
WITH YOUR
SOUL!

DO
FISH
DAN
EMERY

THE
DORMITORY

TIME AND AGAIN DOR
TRIED TO CLAIM THEM
HIS OWN AND
OCCASIONALLY STEPHEN
HAS STOOD, USUALLY
TO BAR

ONE OF THE
WITCH GODS
BROUGHT
DEMONS
OF HER
VOLITION
BEING'S
MAN

1 WONDER
SURPRISE
STORE #3

TRUST
FATHER TO
CONFUSE

ASSUM
MAGNET
DEFINING
SCENARIO
CAN'T SEE
TO DECIDE
BETTER TO
HIS DAUG
OR SACRI
HER FOR
COMM
CO

IS HE PUTTING
ME IN A POSITION
WHERE I WON'T HAVE
A CHOICE?

I'M A TEACHER,
ERIK, NOT AN
ASSASSIN

SUCH
A NOBLE
SENTIMENT
DEAR
BROTHER

BUT I LIVE
INSIDE YOUR
HEART AND
SOUL.

I KNOW
THE
TRUTH

I AM
THE DARK
MIRROR
OF YOUR
LIFE

THROUGH ME
I WELCOME YOU
TO YOUR BLACK
BUG ROOM.

THE
REPOSITORY OF
ALL YOU MOST
REGRET

AND
FEAR!

CASSANDRA
NOVA!

WELL--
ISN'T THIS A
SURPRISE!

CAREFUL

THEY'RE

NOT

JUST

FOR

SHOW.

BRAKA

BRAKA

ONE
MISTAKE,
YOU'RE
DINNER.







THERE IT IS.
THAT MUSIC.
SCHUBER

CAN
COM

AUSC
ATO

IN THE WUNDAG
STRONGHOLD OF HER
WYNDHAM, THE OB
WIZARD WHO CALLED
THE HIGH EVOLUTION

WYNDHAM
HAD AN
ASSISTANT.

THAT
WOULD BE
ME.

WELCOME,
CHARLES
XAVIER.

SINISTER!

CAN YOU
APPRECIATE THE
IRONY?

I, PLAYING
WYNDHAM'S
EAGER
ACOLYTE...

...WHEN
HIS OWN
RESEARCHES
AND DISCOVERIES
WERE BASED ON
THE WORK OF
THE VICTORIAN-
ERA GENETICIST,
NATHANIEL
ESSEX

COME NOW,
DEAR BOY. IS IT
REALLY SO HARD
TO CONNECT
THE DOTS?

ESSEX BECAME
SINISTER AND IN ONE
GUISE OR ANOTHER
HAS BEEN A CRITICAL
PART OF YOUR
COLLECTIVE HISTORY
EVER SINCE.

I SETTLED
FOR MOIRA
MACTAGGART AT
OXFORD, BUT YOU,
CHARLES, WERE THE
PRIZE I REALLY
WANTED.

BUT
YOU HAD
TO PLAY
THE
HERO...

...AND
RUSH
AWAY TO
WAR.

HAD YOU STAYED, JUST IMAGINE WHAT
WE MIGHT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED!

YOU FORGET,
ESSEX, WHEN
A MAN GOES
TO WAR...

--HE
LEARNS
HOW TO
KILL

I WONDER, IF
YOU PULL THAT
TRIGGER, WILL I
TRULY DIE?

I'M
FEELING
EMPIRICAL,
LET'S FIND
OUT

YOU KNOW,
OF COURSE, THIS
ISN'T ALTOGETHER
ABOUT ME.

YOUR X-MEN,
CYCLOPS
AND PHOENIX,
WERE
INSTRUMENTAL
IN MY
CREATION.

LIAR!

PERHAPS,

IF YOU
KILL ME,
YOU'LL
NEVER
KNOW.

THIS IS
NONSENSE.
YOU'RE
NOTHING BUT
A NIGHT-
MARE.

A SHAPE GIVEN TO MY FEARS
AND DOUBTS. I COULDN'T KILL
YOU BECAUSE YOU AREN'T
REAL.

NOW STOP TRYING TO
DISTRACT ME,
WANDA--

--OR
ERIK, OR
WHOEVER'S
DOING THIS--

--AND LET'S
GET ON WITH THE
REAL
BUSINESS
AT
HAND.

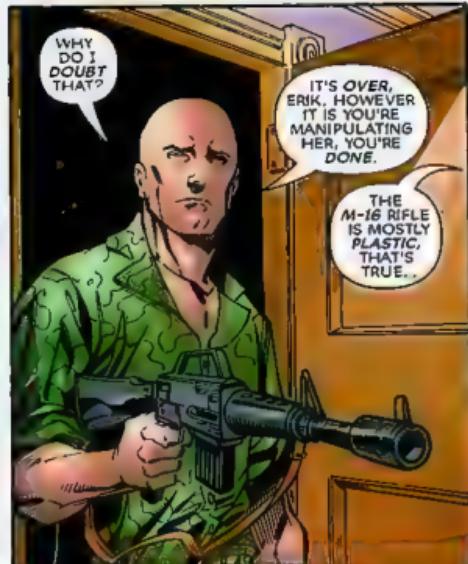
PERHAPS OVER THE
GENERATIONS, I
RETURNED THE
FAVOR.

WHAT A
CONCEPT,
CHARLES!

YOU FOUNDED
THE X-MEN. YOU
TEACH
MUTANTS...

BUT SUPPOSE
I WERE THEIR
TRUE
PROGENITOR!





OLD PATTERNS,
AUTOMATIC
RESPONSES.

THIS IS THE
WAY IT'S ALWAYS
BEEN BETWEEN
US. THERE'S NEVER
ANY TIME TO THINK--
I'M FAR TOO
DANGEROUS.

THE
CONSEQUENCES
OF A MISTAKE
ARE FAR
TOO DIRE.

ERIK,
WHY AM I
HERE?

WHAT ELSE CAN
I DO? I CANNOT
LET HER DIE...

...YET HER LIFE
IS SUCH A TORMENT
THAT DEATH WOULD
BE A MERCY.

IT DOESN'T
HAVE TO BE
THAT WAY.

HAVEN'T YOU
EVER FELT LIKE
YOU WERE IN THE
GRIP OF FORCES FAR
GREATER THAN
YOURSELF?

SOME
THINGS
AREN'T
ALLOWED
TO
CHANGE.

I AM OLD,
CHARLES, AND
SO VERY TIRED. I
HAVE NO MORE
STRENGTH.

THE PATH
OF MY LIFE
IS PILED
HIGH WITH
BODIES.

MY OWN CHILDREN
YEARN FOR THE LOVE
OF A FAMILY THEY'VE
NEVER KNOWN, YET CAN
THINK OF THEIR FATHER
ONLY WITH SHAME
AND REVULSION.

YOU'RE MORE
THAN MY FRIEND,
CHARLES, YOU'RE
MY BROTHER.

I HAVE NO
ONE ELSE TO
TURN TO. NO ONE
I DARE TRUST.

I'VE DONE SUCH HARM--
ESPECIALLY TO THOSE I
SHOULD HAVE LOVED MORE
THAN MY LIFE.

I'M HOPING
FOR A MIRACLE.
EVEN ONE
I DON'T
DESERVE.

AND THIS IS
YOUR
SOLUTION?

HELPING HER
RETREAT INTO
A COCOON OF
FANTASY...

...WHILE
I PUT
A BULLET
THROUGH
YOUR
BRAIN?



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED
WHAT SHE WANTS?

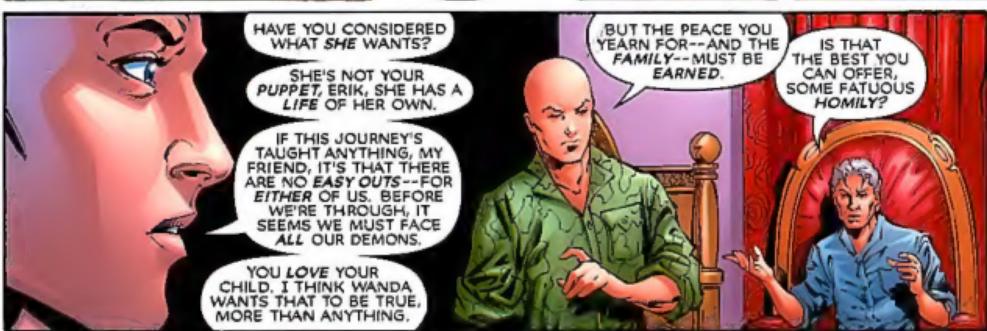
SHE'S NOT YOUR
PUPPET, ERIK. SHE HAS A
LIFE OF HER OWN.

IF THIS JOURNEY'S
TAUGHT ANYTHING, MY
FRIEND, IT'S THAT THERE
ARE NO EASY OUTS--FOR
EITHER OF US. BEFORE
WE'RE THROUGH, IT
SEEMS WE MUST FACE
ALL OUR DEMONS.

YOU LOVE YOUR
CHILD. I THINK WANDA
WANTS THAT TO BE TRUE,
MORE THAN ANYTHING.

BUT THE PEACE YOU
YEARN FOR--AND THE
FAMILY--MUST BE
EARNED.

IS THAT
THE BEST YOU
CAN OFFER,
SOME FATUOUS
HOMILY?



APPARENTLY
SO.

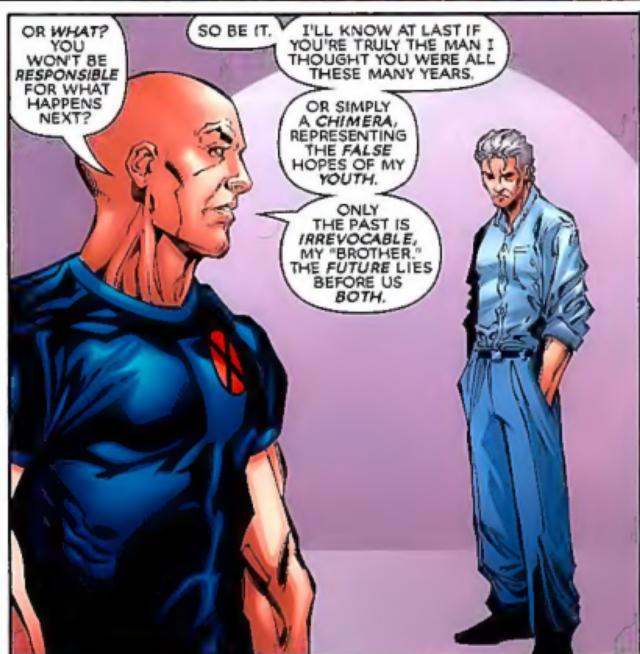
DON'T
LEAVE ME,
CHARLES!

OR WHAT?
YOU
WON'T BE
RESPONSIBLE
FOR WHAT
HAPPENS
NEXT?

SO BE IT.
I'LL KNOW AT LAST IF
YOU'RE TRULY THE MAN I
THOUGHT YOU WERE ALL
THESE MANY YEARS.

OR SIMPLY
A CHIMERA,
REPRESENTING
THE FALSE
HOPES OF MY
YOUTH.

ONLY
THE PAST IS
IRREVOCABLE,
MY "BROTHER,"
THE FUTURE LIES
BEFORE US
BOTH.



WE'RE BACK.

ON GENOSHA,
YES. MY SPELL
HAS RUN ITS
COURSE.

WHAT
HAVE YOU
LEARNED?

THAT SOME OF US HOLD
ONTO GUILT AND SHAME FAR TOO
LONG. THERE'S A STRANGE SECURITY
IN MISERY. IT'S ALMOST COMFORTABLE.
TAKING THE RISK OF MOVING ON;
THAT'S TERRIFYING. APPLIES TO
ERIK. APPLIES TO ME.

FOR ERIK,
IT'S ALWAYS
BEEN ABOUT
FAMILY.

BUILDING A
HOME--A WORLD--
WHERE HE CAN BE
SAFE, WHERE HE NEED
NEVER AGAIN FEEL
AFRAID.

IT ALWAYS
GETS TWISTED
BECAUSE THE
CHILD IN HIM CAN'T
ESCAPE THOSE
NIGHTMARES,
AND WANTS
REVENGE.

YOU COULD
JUST AS EASILY
BE DESCRIBING
WANDA.

THE HELL
OF IT IS, THE
FORCE THAT
DRIVES
THEM BOTH
IS LOVE.

FROM
THAT LOVE,
FOR THAT
LOVE...

THEY
YEARN--
THEY
STRIVE--
FOR AN
IDEAL.

WHAT
COULD BE
MORE PRIMAL,
MORE
PROFOUND?

COMBINE
THEIR POWER
WITH SUCH
PASSION...
ANYTHING IS
POSSIBLE

EVEN
REDEMPTION.

THE STORY
CONTINUES IN
HOUSE OF
#1!

SWORD STROKES

Greetings, EXCALIBUR fans, and welcome to the last edition of *Sword Strokes*...for a while, anyway! That's right—EXCALIBUR will be going on hiatus for a few months, but never fear, it'll be returning shortly with an all-new team that spins directly out the events of this summer's **HOUSE OF M** crossover! Look for **NEW EXCALIBUR #1** to hit the stands in November!

To find out what happens to Professor X, Magneto and Wanda, make sure to pick up **HOUSE OF M #1**, on sale next week! This is one crossover event you aren't going to want to miss, since it will forever alter the destinies of both the X-Men and the New Avengers...in ways that will shock you!

Check out the following **HOUSE OF M**-related titles on sale in June:



HOUSE OF M #1



HOUSE OF M #2



SPIDER-MAN: HOUSE OF M #1

And make sure to return in November for **NEW EXCALIBUR #1**, which will pick up right where **HOUSE OF M** leaves off!

MOLLY LAZER STEPHANIE
ASSISTANT EDITOR EDITOR
SWORD STROKES c/o MARVEL COMICS
417 5TH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10016

IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS PRINTED, PLEASE
LET US KNOW. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT AND LENGTH.

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DON'T MISS
HOUSE OF M #1,
ON SALE
JUNE 1st!